

## Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge 2016 Refuge Vegetation Management Internships

Friends of Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge are sponsoring several internships at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge for 2016. Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is a unique ecological restoration project featuring endangered tallgrass prairie and oak savanna ecosystems. The Refuge is located 20 miles east of Des Moines, near Prairie City, Iowa. Since its inception in 1990, the 5600-acre Refuge has become a home to hundreds of prairie plant species; re-introduced bison, elk, and regal fritillary butterflies; rare grassland birds; and a plethora of undesirable weedy and/or invasive non-native and native species. Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

**Duties:** Refuge Vegetation Management Interns will be an important part of the prairie and savanna restoration work. Duties will include locating, mapping, monitoring and controlling weedy and/or invasive species. Control methods will typically include mechanical and chemical means. However, fall interns may be involved in prescribed fire control activities, if they acquire required training and pass medical and physical fitness standards.



**Benefits:** The internship can vary from 9 - 12 weeks in length, with interns needed from May through November. The intern will receive a stipend of \$3600 to \$4800 for 9-12 weeks of work. Housing will not be provided, but nearby housing is available for rent. Refuge staff will work with students to fulfill internship credit requirements at individual universities. Interested non-students are also eligible to apply.

**Qualifications:** Internships are available to any qualified person 18 years or older with a **valid driver's license**. Refuge Vegetation Management Interns must have an interest in native plants and a desire to learn about prairie and savanna ecosystems and restoration. You must enjoy working outdoors and be willing to do physical work outside during hot, humid weather and other discomforts of working in nature. Refuge Vegetation Management interns must be an Iowa certified pesticide applicator **prior to employment (pass Core and Category 2 or 6 tests)**. Interns will be expected to learn and practice the safe operation and maintenance of brush mowers, brush cutters, backpack pesticide sprayers and other tools of the trade. Also important is an interest in prairie restoration, enthusiasm, and a good work ethic. Other desirable skills include plant identification, GPS, problem solving, communication, and teamwork.

**To Apply:** Submit the following: 1) a one-page **cover letter** describing why you would like to participate in this internship program and what you hope to gain from this experience, **including dates you are available**, 2) a detailed **resume** noting education, experience, and skills, including 3 references and their phone numbers, and 3) a **letter of recommendation** written by an educator or employer. For Refuge Vegetation Management Internships, information should be mailed to: Richard Hager, Wildlife Refuge Specialist, Neal Smith NWR, P.O. Box 399, Prairie City, IA 50228 or [richard\\_hager@fws.gov](mailto:richard_hager@fws.gov). Intern applications including letters of recommendation must be **received or emailed by February 12, 2016**.

For additional information visit <http://www.tallgrass.org> or [http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal\\_Smith/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Neal_Smith/) or contact Richard Hager at (515) 994-3400.